TWEE
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FREE

Hello!

Lovely to see you again. Have you had a haircut? Lost weight? Bought a new sweater? Or is it just that we've been listening to a lot of Scandipop recently and everyone in Sweden looks pop perfect?

It seems like Sweden's natives have a less rose-tinted view of Swedish indiepop though. Turn to page 20 to find out why.

In other news, we've spent the loveliest of afternoons at Laetitia Sadier's house being cooked for (yum!) and an evening with Connan Mockasin marvelling at his genius. Did you know he built a working rollecoaster aged ten?

Lots of love TAF xxx

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This issue is dedicated to Jonnah.

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Visit the website for an extended colour version of the fanzine.

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Je Suis Animal

Words: Erik Sandberg
Photos: Ingrid Melbye and Pavla Kopecna

It's no surprise to hear that Je suis animal's,* Self-Taught Magic From A Book *is being played in Laetitia Sadier's household. After all, there is more than a nod to Stereolab's idiosyncratic sound on the Oslo quintet's debut LP. Je suis snimal pay homage to their peers while creating a subtly textured, and altogether more narrative album in the vein of Music & Movement.

TAF: Tell us about yourselves!

Elin: Hello I am Elin, I sing and play guitar. Je suis animal formed in Oslo around and about 2004.

Anthony: I play guitar, keyboards and sing. Merete is my girlfriend. At the moment I'm making the music for a children's theatre production.

Merete: I play bass and sing.

Matt: I play guitar and sing a little. I played drums on the album.

Pål: I work in a mental institution.

TAF: The Lost & Lonesome Recording Company has released many greats; The Lucksmiths, The Aislers Set, The Ladybug Transistor and many more. What's it like working with such a reputable label in Australia and have you any plans for a UK album release?

A: We were originally planning to go to New York to mix the album at Gary Olsen's studio, Marlborough Farms. We know Gary through supporting The Ladybug Transistor in Oslo - and Gary's a bit like the patron saint for our band - he's been so helpful. We sent Gary the rough mixes we'd done so he could hear the songs and get some ideas, but in the end we couldn't afford to go to New York so we mixed it ourselves here in Oslo.

A little while later Mark Monnone from Lost & Lonesome was in New York visiting Gary. On his return flight to Australia, he found that his iPod had been emptied; except for the rough mixes we'd sent Gary. Bit cheeky of Gary I suppose, but luckily Mark liked our music. Lost & Lonesome have been really great and there are many good bands on there. We're going over to Australia to tour next June.

E: Yes, we've been really amazed by the enthusiasm and interest we have met through the Lost & Lonesome label, and the bands. I am a serious fan of The Aislers Set. They sound like the Shop Assistants and The Crystals melted into one. It breaks my heart. We also love The Ladybug Transistor of course. And The Zebras: we did some gigs with them recently. I have got to know Australia pretty well by now even though I have never been

there! I had a discussion the other day about kangaroos. I wondered if they are as normal to Australians as sheep are to us "northerners." I suppose we'll soon find out when we go on tour. I can't wait to see a woolly kangaroo eating grass in a field!

M: We're licensing our album to Angular Recording Corporation in the UK, and it's supposed to be released at the start of December. A few songs have been re-mastered and it's finally coming out on vinyl!

TAF: You're doing a one-off split single with Wake the President on Electric Honey/Lucky Number Nine Records in the new year. Are you all big Tigermilk fans?

E: Yes, a release on such a cool label is really great for us. Tigermilk is unforgettable and it's amazing how it took off so much from that release. I think the split with Wake the President will be a match made in pop heaven! We are of course fans of the Glasgow and Edinburgh music scene.

TAF: There seems to be a healthy lineage of Scottish bands through your music via Music & Movement, National Park and The Delgados.

What kind of impact has Scottish music made on your repertoire and Norway in general?

E: There aren't many Scottish bands that come over here and play.

I am a serious fan of The Aislers Set. They sound like the Shop Assistants and The Crystals melted into one. It breaks my heart.

There is a healthy indiepop underground scene here (I would say on a good day), and the city should be visited more frequently! Belle and Sebastian are really popular over here. There is a feeling of Glasgow being the core of indiepop somehow, and as you probably can hear we are very influenced by the C-86 scene, especially Shop Assistants. Postcard Records bands... also The Delgados, yes, and Camera Obscura are great. And of course The Pastels!

TAF: how did you enjoy your UK tour? Being a Je suis animal obsessive I watched you in Glasgow, London and at Indietracks within the space of a week! Apart from the holes in your pockets, was it a worthwhile experience?

E: Thanks! Yes it turned out very well for us actually. Now our album will come out in the UK on Angular Records (Release date is 1st of December) because of this tour, and I suppose this lovely split 7" (with Wake the President) too.

I had a discussion the other day about kangaroos, I wondered if they are as normal to Australians as sheep are to us "northerners."

I loved playing the Indietracks festival and the Twee as Fuck night too of course. They're the best festival and club in the world.

TAF: What are your plans for the future?

M: We've just released a new single on Cloudberry Records - it's called 'Painted In My Face'. It was recorded in a studio that we've now moved into to rehearse.

A: Over the past year we've been putting all our time into promoting our album and getting it licensed so we're really looking forward to writing new songs.

http://www.myspace.com/jesuisanimal

Love Is All

Words and photo: Pavla Kopecna

Love Is all are one of those bands that you can not help but fall in love with till it hurts. I first came across them through the 2005 single 'Make Out Fall Out Make Up' and remember being stunned by the raw passion emanating from Josephine's vocals, the simple, yet grabbing lyrics, and the unique instrumental arrangement that reminded me at once of Essential Logic and a kid's street carnival. We ask Markus nine times that same song and see what he comes up with.

Are you busy doing nothing?

Actually busy doing SOMETHING at the moment. We got back from a US tour a week ago, had like half a day's rest and went straight to our studio to record five new tracks that will be on some kind of an EP or mini album next year. We are mixing them this week, very excited to hear the result! The album is released in the US on 11 November on What's Your Rupture?.

What would you wish for at a wishing well?

Just before answering this I was coincidentally reading *On Some Far Away Beach*, David Sheppard's Eno biography. It made me think that there should be at least one non-musician in every rock band. I was also thinking that Love is All should make a record with a big symphonic orchestra backing us up, but with the orchestra consisting of all our best friends playing instruments they can't really play. Maybe that would be a wish, along with great success in all our projects and world peace of course. The new record is produced by ourselves and Wyatt Cusick, from one of our favorite bands The Aislers Set.

What keeps you up at night?

Unlike Josephine, who wrote those lyrics, I am not at all frightened by the thought of outer space and meteorites colliding with earth and so on. Now, if we are talking music I would say that the worst part of the music business is when it becomes business more than music. That kind of thing is so boring I don't even want to talk about it. Also, the thought of Sarah Palin possibly becoming one of the most powerful people on earth. That is scary.

Have you lost any dreams yet?

Well, thank you! [If you're referring to Girlfriendo] I was in the band for the last 6 months or so, so I can't really say that much about why we split up... but I am glad we did because it gave me the chance to start a band where I was doing what I really wanted to do. And I think that goes for everyone in the band, we all need to like everything we're doing or we'll get real grumpy. We used to think that going to shows was often only exiting for the last 2 minutes or so when the band finally started getting loud and energetic. So we thought "that's what this band should be about, the last 2 minutes for 30 minutes"! I think it still works pretty well and people tend to look pretty exited at our shows. I am disappointed we never actually got to meet John Peel.

TV or radio?

I listen to the radio a lot, both on Swedish FM (and I work for the Swedish equivalent of the BBC sometimes) and to some NPR podcasts. I don't like TV that much - prefer DVDs or just YouTube clips. I think the fact that it is all there on the internet has very quickly made everyone assume that anything is always available. It's great for the most part, but it does kind of ruin the magic of waiting for that special book or record you have been looking for.

What's better – making out or making up?

A few years ago there was actually some making out going on within LIA... now we tend to argue like most bands do, but it never gets very ugly and we always make up very soon. Making out is a lot more fun though. I don't think we have made either with other bands, but once I stole a bucket of blood from the quite annoyed Norwegian theatrical rockers Turbonegro.

Have you ever tried too hard?

Ouch, yes... that is almost always the case when we try to make music, we tend to change everything a hundred times and are never satisfied.

Tell us a rumour...

Our bass player Johan likes to ride his bike through underground train tunnels at night.

Is the future more uncertain?

I guess it is in a way... I know we are making this EP thing now, that should be out early next year, but not sure after that. We will have to see how we feel after touring this album, and if we get a new record deal also.

Bonus track - is love really all?

The name is from an episode of The Man From U.N.C.L.E. that Josephine and I watched one day... there was this evil sort of hippie sect that were planning on taking over the world of course, and over the gate to their garden was a sign reading "LOVE IS ALL". I wish I had that episode, cause now I only remember it vaguely. Josephine said "that's our band name"! But I thought it was too 60s sounding and protested for a week or so. I like it now though. I think we might be a bunch of hippies in disguise.

www.myspace.com/loveisall8
New album *A Hundred Things That Keep Me Up All Night* is out now on What's Your Rupture? Records.

CONNAN MOCKASIN

Words: Rory Mackie
Photos: Pavla Kopecna

Connan Mockasin is a helium-voiced New Zealander. An autoharp-playing Brian Jones look-alike with a mop of tousled blonde hair, talent to burn and an eye on world domination. Connan Mockasin is something of a quiet genius. A pint-sized Joe Meek. A wonky Phil Spector. An indiepop Aphex Twin who builds his own instruments and records in haunted houses. The inventor of Psychedelic Twee, and a throwback to those 'Nuggets'-obsessed bands on Creation in the tail-end of the eighties (The Dentists, Revolving Paint Dream), only more mental-sounding and squeaky. Tonight he's playing at London's hipster friendly Durrr club, with a new band in tow and fresh from recording the songs that should ultimately become his debut LP.

TAF: So Connan, the last time we interviewed you it was a complete disaster. The pub was playing terrible disco music really loudly and what we recorded was inaudible. I was just completely incompetent basically. So would you mind if we went over some of that stuff again?

CM: I remember we were talking about how I was going to record in New Zealand and then build the chemical instruments.

TAF: Chemical instruments?

CM: Yeah, a drum machine that does everything and an terface that would do a few things. One, that means that everything wouldn't just be running through a computer but would be operated by someone onstage with big physical movements.

TAF: That sounds a bit like Kraftwerk's notorious 'Drum Cage'.

CM: Yeah?

TAF: Yeah it was this huge, man sized metal cage which shot out lasers, and the drummer would stand inside and trigger drum sounds by breaking the laser beams with his arms or legs.

CM: That sounds amazing.

TAF: But it only worked about twice I think. So did you build yours?

CM: It was really involved so I didn't get any of the instruments ready to bring back over, they're really heavy as well so I think I'm going to wait for the next album, because they don't really suit the music on this one.

I ENDED UP BUILDING A ROLLERCOASTER IN MY BACK YARD

TAF: I think it's amazing that someone is actually building their own instruments in this day and age, it's brilliant. You've always built stuff haven't you?

CM: Yeah, I was really lucky. I grew up on a farm and there was all this agricultural machinery lying around and I just sort of experimented. My parents were pretty tolerant I guess and I even ended up building a working rollercoaster in my back yard when I was ten.

TAF What?! No! A real rollercoaster?

CM: Yup. I got an arc-welding set for Christmas and taught myself to use it, built the rollercoaster and various Go-carts and things.

TAF: Mental. So the album is finished then?

CM: The first half was done in the UK with James from Lawrence Arabia and I finished up in New Zealand pretty much alone, producing and engineering myself. I was recording in a haunted house in Wellington and at my parent's house when they were at work - they've got really tall ceilings so it sounds like you're in church. I was working with my friend Will and we'd have to get up really early so we could start as soon as the parents went to work. Then when they got back we'd build a bonfire on the beach and get drunk. It was great, very relaxing, though a bit like being a teenager again. I'm hoping to put everything I did out as a double mini-album on two ten-inch records.

TAF: So things are looking pretty good for you at the moment? Album's finished and the instruments are built. But it wasn't always so easy for you here; weren't you homeless for a few months when you arrived in London?

CM: When I came over initially with The Mockasins (Connan's original band, now dissolved) we hadn't really lined up anything in advance. When you reach a certain level of success in New Zealand that's pretty much it, there's nowhere else to go. So we decided we had to move away to try and find a new audience. And, yeah, we had the odd place to stay with friends the occasional night and somewhere to store our gear, but we spent a fair bit of time sleeping in Hyde Park. I think we actually did two gigs when we were homeless.

TAF: Whereas most people do gigs *for* the homeless.

CM: Well I suppose technically we were. One night we were trying to get some sleep when we heard this dull repetitive thud booming away in the distance and we realised that it was The Strokes headlining the Wireless festival. What's really weird is that we played that festival a year later, I remember being onstage and looking out at the crowd, and just beyond them was where we used to set up our sleeping bags, our little camp. That really brought home how far we'd come.

WE SPENT A FAIR BIT OF TIME SLEEPING IN HYDE PARK. I THINK WE ACTUALLY DID TWO GIGS WHEN WE WERE HOMELESS.

TAF: Metaphorically, if not geographically.

CM: (laughs) Right.

TAF: And any plans for the future?

CM: I'm planning to do a split single with Ladyhawke, covering one of each other's songs and maybe doing one together but it's difficult for her to find the time, she's so busy. I'm just experimenting with stuff, working with new instruments and musicians. I like to keep things open ended as possible, otherwise it gets boring.

www.myspace.com/connanmockasin

Laetitia Sadier

Words by Rory Mackie
Photos by Pavla Kopecna

Laetitia Sadier is great company. Even after enduring a morning-long photo shoot in her home , she insists on making us all a proper sit down lunch. This is quite simply astonishing. In my experience, interviewees simply do not do this sort of thing. You'd never catch Ray Davies, for instance, whipping you up a full English before a nice sit-down and a bit of a natter. However, as we tuck into rice and vegetables and hot ginger tea, it becomes clear that Mme Sadier is about as far from your average egocentric, self-obsessed musician as is possible to imagine. She is a gracious and charming hostess, her talk ranging from the lack of left wing opposition to global capitalism; ("Tony Benn for President!"), to the brilliance of Kevin Ayers, Robert Wyatt, Common and The Plastic Ono Band. Her house is home to a record collection to die for (Morricone, Albert Ayler, Je suis animal), gloriously Stereolab-esque retro décor and the very finest collection of cheeses it's ever been my privilege to sample. After lunch we pop in to her local and talk turns to Stereolab and Monade...

TAF: So *Monstre Cosmique* has been out for a few months now?

LS: It's hard to think back on it but at the time it was very exciting to make this record and it was made in two batches. One slow batch of working with the band, writing a song and then working it out with the band. In a year and a half, I'm not too proud to say, we finished six songs. We really took our time.

TAF: Six great songs though...

LS: And then I met some people in France, from Toulouse, and I felt that finally I had met my peers, my musical peers, people that I could identify with intellectually, artistically, musically. It took a long, long time to find them and then finally I found these people, or they found me, and in one week I wrote four songs. And I was like OK, you and you, come on over and let's record these four songs together, because I have to record an album quick. So it was done in two batches in France, where we have the studio. It was a beautiful, beautiful experience because for me as someone who, when I first started writing songs fifteen years ago, each time that I did write one I thought it was a miracle that had happened. I did not have the confidence to appreciate, that yes I can write songs, and in fact, between you and I, it's not that big a deal to write a song – it's not like you have been blessed by the hand of God. Anyone can write a song, but it's writing a good song that's most difficult, where the real challenge is. So for me it was in my trajectory from the inception, from nothing to doing stuff on my own mostly, with a little help from my friends on the first

record, to then having a band, moving to France and going, "OK this thing is a band now" and to working as a band. I couldn't really play the guitar or anything, but because I hated practising on my own in my bedroom, I'd rather progress with people. I find it much more exciting. I found myself some people that were not super players or anything but where it would be interesting to develop together, because if someone is super-good and the others are crap it's going to be very boring for the ones who aren't so able. So I found myself a nice bunch and off we went and recorded the second album, which was very much a learning process, getting to know each other and the studio, working out how to do this.

Anyone can write a song, but it's writing a good song that's most difficult.

I never went to rock school. Although there is one in Bordeaux, I thought music was supposed to be about anti-school and about rebelling. Things have changed though.

TAF: So this is very different from how you started Monade, basically alone but with a little help from Rosie from Pram. Is that right?

LS: I happened to go to Rosie and Matt's house and Rosie agreed to run the 16-track machine and participate a little bit and Matt participated, and yeah, that was lovely. You know I'm discovering that it's nice to do stuff on your own but it's much, much nicer when you collaborate with people.

TAF: How much collaboration is there in the writing process? In one sense the album sounds very written, symphonic almost, but then it's very spontaneous and loose sounding too...

LS: Once you're in the studio, a lot of things are added. For instance the tracks that we did with the band, we decided to have a string section, so Marie organised some students from the Conservatoire Bordeaux to come up to play some strings and Joe Watson of Stereolab wrote some arrangements, no we wrote them together, well he wrote them and then I was saying, "Oh I like this" or "No, I don't like that."

TAF: I think that counts...

LS: He's a super-trained musician, and while I totally admit to not being able to read or write music, actually I can barely play music, but I can certainly hear music and luckily you can somehow convey that.

TAF: Like George Clinton with Funkadelic?

LS: Oh, does George work like that too?

TAF: Yeah very much so; or like Roky Erickson, "Make it more orange."

LS: (laughs) Yes! So there was that

aspect of writing the record and there was the aspect of writing four songs in a week, working much more on demand rather than, "Oooh, I feel one coming on."

TAF: So you made a conscious effort to sit down and write? It wasn't like they were coming to you from the heavens?

LS: Well you still have to channel them, but sometimes you have to go and get them I guess. And it's feasible, so for me that's where there was big progress on this record, it was an effort that was made together. I invited as many people as I could [to collaborate] and because of the spontaneous aspect of it and because now I would feel comfortable saying, "you want a song for your birthday? Okay, I can write you a song for your birthday."

TAF: Are there any stresses in being in two bands? The Stereolab and Monade albums came out fairly close to each other, right? Has that caused any problems?

LS: Personally I don't see the problem. I think that it's good to have more creativity in the world. But I can see how some band members or managers might see it as a threat to Stereolab. To the extent that I wonder how I would feel if Tim had another band that was coming on tour with us to support us in America.

TAF: Well, he did that Turn-On album didn't he?

LS: Yes, yes he did, but maybe Monade is a bit more than just a Turn-On album. Basically in Stereolab I don't write any songs. There's no room for my writing. I think that's a *mistake*. I have no control over that, I can't persuade Tim to let me co-write.

TAF: Obviously Stereolab are an amazing band. You write the vocal melodies and the lyrics, but Monade is your opportunity to do all the things you don't get to do with them?

LS: Yeah, I'm a naturally lazy person and I'd rather stay home and watch TV and drink red wine, but somehow there is a force in me, I don't know where it comes from, and I do believe we have a destiny. If we're put here to do something then we will do it and if we're not supposed to do this thing then we won't. I really feel like I've been put on this planet to do this band Monade as well as Stereolab, and that the two things are complementary.

Marie organised some students from the Conservatoire Bordeaux to come up to play some strings.

There have been times when I've been on stage with my guitar, barely knowing how to play it and yet still there doing it and thinking, "What the fuck am I doing to myself? Why am I

putting myself through this torture? I'm humiliating myself!" But since then I've learned how to play, even if it took a while. I just have to do it.

There's a force that dictates and it's called Monade. I don't want to sell ten million records, I don't have a business plan for this. I don't expect laurels or awards, although that would be nice, but it's not about that, it's just that there were songs there that were queuing up and they needed to get out. I wanted to learn to play the guitar and to create an environment where these things could happen. That's the nice thing about art, about the things that we do, you can create environments where you're gonna do your thing. People will or won't take an interest; luckily they have so far. And that kind of an exchange is great.

TAF: And do you think that the two bands in any way influence each other? I've read some reviews of *Chemical Chords* that have said that it's either the most 'human' or 'organic' sounding Stereolab record for some years, and that's kind of how I think of Monade in relation to Stereolab, if that makes any sense...

LS: I think Monade is more an emotional reflection rather than a cerebral concept. Tim's a very cerebral person, but I think he's also very intuitive. He writes with his intuition more than with his brain, I think. He can play little games, little brainy games, and so can I because it's fun, but certainly I will implicate my emotions, so the songs will be coloured by that. It's a bit of a mystery how Tim works, what's at play in his songs exactly, it's kind of bright and dark at the same time.

TAF: I think that whole thing of Stereolab being purely cerebral is a bit of a fallacy anyway, I mean I hear emotional warmth and despair and everything else in-between in Stereolab songs...

LS: Oh, very, very much so, I find there's space to talk about everything – it's not just cerebral. Maybe people say that because they equate emotional songs to, "weeeeeeeurgh" [does spot-on Alanis Morrisette style screech] but that style of music to me is totally unemotional, totally affected, the furthest thing away from real emotion.

TAF: And are Stereolab Monade fans?

LS: Joe has worked with us, and the others are very British about it, they neither love nor hate Monade. Sorry I can't bring you any juicy rivalry, no *gangs*! We're about to embark on a tour together and we'll be on the same tourbus for three weeks, so that could be trouble. It wasn't my idea actually, I would have never thought of it. It was Martin our manager [who suggested it], which he now denies, because he worries that I'll be tired, that it will be too much for me to do both. I know it's going to be a bit of a challenge but I don't know if I can or I can't. I think I can. So we will be together, it's the only way I can tour *Monstre Cosmique* in the states. It just wouldn't be financially viable otherwise.

www.myspace.com/stereolab
www.myspace.com/monade

Anyone for Scandipop?

Words: Rory Mackie

With an endless stream of great indiepop bands coming out of Sweden, interest in 'Scandipop' is at an all time high. London alone has at least two regular club nights playing purely Swedish music. So why this very English fixation? And what does it feel like to be on the other end of it? We asked four Swedish indiepop bands (Bonne Idee, Bridal Shop, The Margarets and Signed Papercuts) to provide some answers.

TAF: To an outsider it seems like Sweden has a really exciting indiepop scene at the moment, with great bands popping up on a near-weekly basis. In your experience is this an exciting time for the Swedish 'scene'?

Signed Papercuts: Yes. Of course it is. The more music there is, the bigger the chance to find something new to like.

Bonne Idee: Actually if you would ask us what kind of music we listen to our answer would include mostly smaller, newly established Swedish bands. So our reply would be 'yes' but, when you think about it, it feels pretty narrow-minded. It is hard to see since we also are from Sweden. It feels like it's hard to tell when indie is on its way up since the whole point is that it should be independent of the commercial scene.

The Margarets: Yes that's right. But you can't forget that Sweden has always been a small country that looks up to England when it comes to popular culture. Sometime in the early 2000s there was a wave of new Swedish labels and it meant that some bands got the opportunity to release their own stuff. But everything is done in the English vein, so there's no real Swedish indie culture outside of Sweden. But it's great that the Swedes finally got this whole indie thing.

Bridal Shop (Peter): Well, since the Swedish music scene ignored the 90s indie era by singing in Swedish and bringing the world bands such as Ace of Base and Roxette, maybe this is the opportunity do to things right. Though you have to admit that in 2008 this can not be seen as a progressive scene. There are many fantastic bands, but I feel that most of them lack the ambition to reach beyond their influences.

Bridal Shop (Toomas): Yes, it's more "fun" to make music that sounds like the 80s, not new music. Many Swedish bands are great, for example Pluxus, The Field, Studio and Häpna Records. These are artists that make Swedish music really interesting.

TAF: Which Swedish bands (other than yourselves) would you recommend to Twee readers?

BI: Maybe Chuck Morgan, Days, Broder Daniel, [ingenting], The Radio Dept, Jens Lekman, The Tough Alliance, El Perro del Mar, Joel Alme, The Concretes, My Darling You, Florence Valentine, Wildbirds & Peacedrums.

BS: Bob Hund, Håkan Hellström, The Morning Paper, Twig, Studio, Taken By Trees, Franke, The Tiny, Weeping Willows, The Radio Dept, Sound of Arrows, Webstrarna, Björn Olsson, The Embassy and AK-MOMO are all great bands.

SP: Second-Hand Furniture are one of a kind, really like them. And then there are Days, Franke, Honeydrips (the early stuff), Crime Time, Dorotea, Tidy Ups and Funday Mornings.

TM: You know, most of them, the obvious; Days, Taken by Trees, Jens Lekman, Laakso. Another band who deserve attention are the wonderfully named Last Night's Band. Fans of Twee as Fuck will love them. I once wrote to them asking for some lyrics. They answered something like this: "A magician does not explain his tricks."

TAF: How much homegrown success do Swedish indiepop bands enjoy? On occasion it seems like some bands do better abroad (in the UK, US and Asia especially) than on home soil. For instance I know that The Margarets played gigs in London and had records out in America before they'd even played Stockholm! Is this a typical situation?

BS (Peter): It's like when Jesus returns to his home town and they're not impressed by his skills, only in his own house is a prophet without honour. On the other hand, when you suddenly get something in abundance you tend to lose interest.

BS (Toomas): Err, yeah. In Stockholm for instance, you can play one or two gigs, after that you're boring. In the UK, Oasis is still one of the biggest bands. Do you know what I mean?

SP: Yes. Sweden is a small country with many bands so it's hard for a small band that plays a lesser known style of music to get listeners here. Bigger country, more people, more listeners.

BI: Sweden is a pretty small country

for niche culture. If you get shows you get them outside the country or in Stockholm.

TM: True, sometimes you have to play in front of a crowd of fifteen people. So, when you're successful in Sweden you don't notice it that much and can't enjoy a big success. I think sometimes that countries like USA, England and Japan do see something exotic in Swedish pop bands and especially the English. When we played in Stockholm 50% of the crowd were British. I think that sometimes the Swedish audience is bored with Swedish indie and that's why bands are looking outside their native country.

TAF: Are there any bands that were particularly influential in Swedish indiepop circles? Acid House Kings and Days seem to get mentioned a lot, any more?

TM: Yeah, I think those bands could be the inspiration to form a group but when it comes to the sound almost everyone mentions The Smiths as an influence. The Margarets take the best parts from The Smiths and The Stone Roses.

BS (Peter): Everything released by Sarah Records and, even though people won't admit it, Håkan Hellström's debut in 2000 made a great impact on all Swedish pop music.

BS (Toomas): Broder Daniel and the sounds coming from Gothenburg. Personally, I'm not very influenced by the two bands mentioned in your question. In my ears Franke, The Embassy, The Radio Dept and Bob Hund have made a huge impact on the sound of Swedish indiepop. And of course Jens Lekman. He's the greatest!

BI: We'd have to agree about Morrissey and The Smiths being very frequent influences. Other influences are The Magnetic Fields, The Velvet Underground, that first Håkan Hellström record and The Beach Boys.

SP: It's a hard one. Radio Dept. has always been one of our favourite Swedish indiepop bands. *Lesser Matters* is one of the best Swedish indiepop albums of all time. New bands; maybe Twig and The Bridal Shop. It depends on what you like.

TAF: Which blogs, fanzines, radio programmes have been particularly helpful in Sweden? Is there a good infrastructure in place for Swedish indiepop? What are the good POP! nights, clubs, venues?

BI: The record label and promoters Luxxury, Labrador, Club Svanen, the festival Rip It Up In The City. All these recommendations are mainly for Gothenburg (which by the way is a quite good place to be if you are into indiepop). The public service radiostation P3 plays some good music sometimes. Another tip is The TV Series "Upp Till Kamp" which is available on DVD.

BS (Toomas): Yeah, P3 Pop is the best radio show for pop music. Friendly Noise arrange nice gigs in Stockholm. Also On Our Honeymoon, Landet (a venue) and DigFi are places to visit for a nice indiepop night.

SP: There is the blog Swedes Please (http://www.swedesplease.net/) who focus on Swedish pop of all kinds. But we don't really read blogs or listen to enough radio to have an opinion. If you like indiepop and beer then we second the recommendation for On Our Honeymoon in Gothenburg, a club where you will hear all your favourite songs.

TM: Fraction Discs is a great mail order shop based in Gothenburg. As far as clubs and festivals go, I'd say Sticky Fingers in Gothenburg, Debaser (Stockholm), Don't Tell me That (Jönköping), Rip It Up (Säffle), Emmaboda Festival and Way Out West.

BS (Peter): All the blogs on Swedish indie pop are non-Swedish. In Sweden, people like to write about 'fashion', and what they eat for breakfast. But in every block, there is a lonely youngster 'independently' writing fantastic music. We're strange.

www.myspace.com/signedpapercuts
www.myspace.com/thebridalshop
www.myspace.com/themargaretspop
www.myspace.com/bonneide

TOP 5 SWEDISH INDIEPOP SONGS

SIGNED PAPERCUTS:

1 Days: Song 3
2 Radio Dept: We Climb the Wired Fences
3 Franke: Aldrig Förstå
4 Håkan Hellström: Minnen Av Aprilhimlen
5 Tidy Ups: 25 Degrees

BRIDAL SHOP:

1 Popsicle: Not Forever
2 Webstarna: Moln på marken
3 Elegent Machinery: Process
4 Björn Olsson: Tjörn
5 Pontus och Amerikanarna: Godmorgon Columbus

THE MARGARETS:

1 Last Night's Band: Hide and Seek
2 Days: Downhill
3 Peter Bjorn and John: Young Folks
4 The Concretes: Teen Love
5 Laakso: Demon

BONNE IDEE:

1 Håkan Hellström: Minnen Av Aprilhimlen
2 Joel Alme: When The Moon Shakes
3 Fred Akerström: Jag Ger Dig Min Morgon
4 Broder Daniel: Shoreline
5 Jens Lekman: Maple Leaves (Swedish Version)

BORING, BABY BORING?

Words by Krister Bladh
Photo by Pavla Kopecna

Krister Bladh is a member of A Smile And A Ribbon - a band we discovered through pure and unadulterated MySpace browsing. He is further a respected authority on Swedish indiepop. Rumour has it he might be writing a PhD thesis on it. Here he tells us what he really thinks about the independent pop music scene in his home country.

Some people are of the impression that Sweden is the place to be if you're into that thing called POP. But it's not exactly true. I was listening to Dorotea the other day and couldn't help feeling nostalgia for a time when it seemed pop could go places and actually change something.

In 2004, in Sweden, it really felt like being part of something bigger, something important. Even the daily papers would review a new Hefner record. There was this club night called Performance I'd been too young to attend – until it closed!

Many bands, club nights and festivals that had just started seemed to disappear as quickly as they had popped up. It feels like many people who were around then still love the same music, but with the new kids getting into pop, it's like it's not a permanent condition. In the new, increasingly virtual environment it feels boring only to listen to one kind of music. I'd reckon I hear at least one new band every day, or a band I've never listened to before. So for me, a fast internet connection has only meant that I can delve deeper into the obscurity of history and into the maze of microscopic new indiepop bands from all over the world. Ever since discovering Belle & Sebastian all those years ago I still think it's the most natural thing in the world that I need to hear more, learn more. I too listen to other things than indiepop of course, but now it feels like I have some sort of silly duty to make people continue listening to indiepop, or discovering it for the first time. Which is also boring in a way.

IN THE NEW, INCREASINGLY VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT IT FEELS BORING TO ONLY LISTEN TO ONE KIND OF MUSIC

And of course we have our fair share of great club nights and bands in Sweden these days, but it's sometimes hard to keep the faith.

It's hard to keep the interest up for clubs and live events even more, and bands don't really sell many records or have venues to play. There is the odd success story however, like Gothenburg's On Our Honeymoon club night and the Rip It Up festival that took place for the second time this year. I have high hopes still, and it's so inspiring listening to things like Twig's debut album, the new Liechtenstein single and Cocoanut Groove!

Call me boring, but I'm not giving up. We may need more evangelists in Sweden, but just looking across the North Sea and the Atlantic it's obvious that POP is HAPPENING and it's ALL OVER the place. Maybe we have to succumb to the fact that subcultures will more and more be created and maintained online, virtually – Instead of locally, through the encounters between lost teenagers. Boring? Maybe not. If I can't find a fellow Dorotea fan in Malmö, I'm sure to find him or her online.

A Smile And A Ribbon:
www.myspace.com/asaar

A Smile And A Ribbon performing in London

Album Review

Crystal Stilts

Crystal Stilts: 'Alight Of Night'(Slumberland LP)

First off, I don't think I've xxxxx ever heard so much reverb on a record. 'Alight Of Night' is absolutely drenched in the stuff. Vocals are buried deep beneath layers of skree, drumming is sparse, the whole thing is wreathed in echo, and sounds not unlike a Phil Specter produced Galaxie 500. Down a well.

Along with Comet Gain's 'Broken Record Prayers' and The Pains of Being Pure At Heart's debut, this is all I've been listening to for weeks. It's a record that gets under the skin, the most exciting, different music I've heard for far too long now. From the weezy melancholia of 'Graveyard Orbit' to the stately elegance of standout 'Shattered Shine' , this otherworldly record keeps producing moments of such excellence,such BEAUTY, that the listener is left reeling.

The album owes a huge debt to the Velvet Underground (but that's no bad thing, right?) and I can hear bits of fifties rock'n'roll (especially Link Wray), and the Flying Nuns bands here too, but this is so much more than the sum of its parts. A proper album that ebbs and flows, 'Alight Of Night' is unique, utterly beguiling listening. Oh,and 'City in The Sea' is the most gorgeous thing you'll hear all year.

Written by Rory Mackie

Seven Sevens

Seven 7"s we can't get enough of...

Je suis animal: Fortune Map/Wake The President: Miss Tierney (Electric Honey/Lucky No. 9 7")
Fortune Map is a gorgeous, gauzy, daydream of a song that sounds a little like a lost track from Velocity Girl's wonderful *Copacetic* LP, and not entirely dissimilar to Jenny Ondioline-era Stereolab; i.e. completely brilliant. Wake The President's Miss Tierney is an unashamedly romantic janglepop epic, complete with Sha-la-las and everything. An unmissably ace split 7. Rory Mackie

Phil Wilson: Neon Lights (Slumberland 7")
I bet you didn't think you'd find a song written by Kraftwerk reviewed on this page. Let alone one covered by Sugar Tax and Simple Minds, but June Brides' Phil Wilson's take on it is as surprising as it is gentle, softly throbbing along to nestle itself into your consciousness for weeks. Listen out for the banjo, and check out a little video Phil made for it at http://uk.youtube.com/user/philjunebride. Pavla Kopecna

The Pains of Being Pure At Heart: Everything With You (Fortuna Pop! 7")
In which we witness the addition of the Posies/Fannies/Velvet Crush grunge-pop guitar solo to The Pains' sonic armoury. This is POBPAH at their most New Wave and radio-friendly and thus three minutes of indiepop perfection that it's completely impossible to sit still to. . RM

Cause Co-Motion: I Lie Awake (Slumberland 7")
Short, crackling and punchy, this is indiepop punk (if there is such a thing) at its best. The vocals warm up the pointy guitar riffs, while the drums hole-punch all the way through with a fast and steady beat. To the point perfect. PK

Aberfeldy: Come On Claire (17 Seconds 7")
Whilst the Major sector flounders, the Independents seem to flourish as is evident in this debut single from 17 Seconds Records. Quite simply, this is bliss: Neil Young backed by Joyzipper at their poppiest. Edinburgh is the new Glasgow, it would appear. Erik Sandberg

Minisnap: The Whistler (Cloudberry 7")
Featuring an intro nicked from The Wolfhounds' Stars in The Tarmac, some Young Folks whistling and a recorder solo straight from the early Belle and Sebastian songbook, this should, on paper, add up to a kind of greatest hits of indiepop style mini-masterpiece. But does it? Ummm, yes it does, thanks for asking, RM

Ipso Facto, Six and Three Quarters (Mute Irregulars 7")
Whoever recorded the drums on Ipso Facto's new single deserves a medal. They are great: a military parade snare punctuating subtly overblown lyrics, cold vocal and church organ. Again. And again. (And again.) ES

Three x Five

Five songs we'd give up Christmas for...

Pavla:

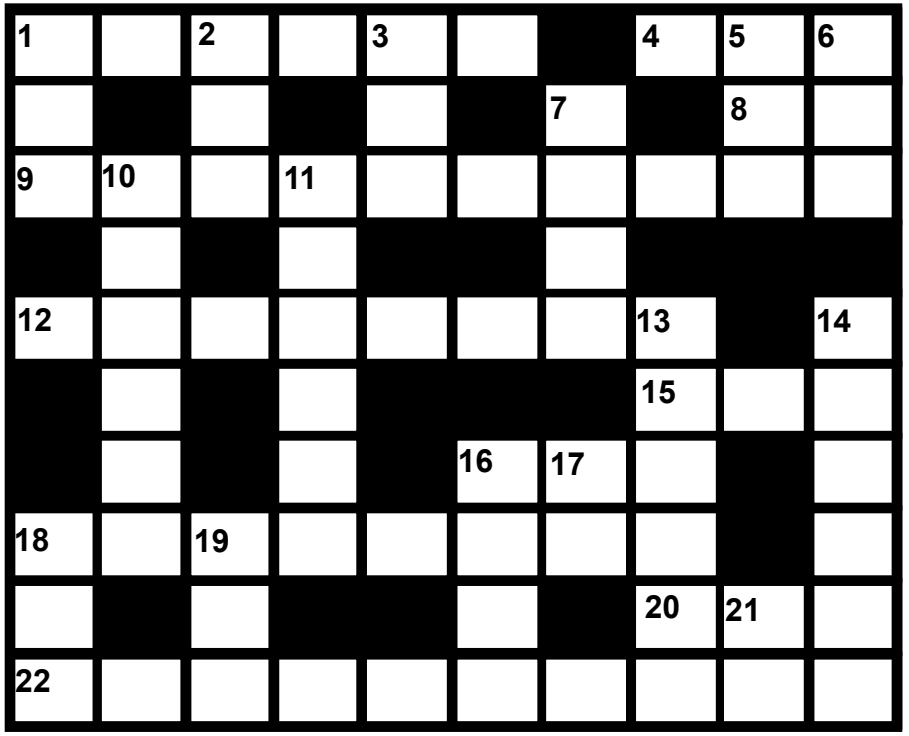
Tronics: Cruisin
Comet Gain: Look At You Now You're Crying
Acid House Kings: This Heart Is A Stone
Crystal Stilts: Shattered Shine
Liechtenstein: Security by Design

Jude Georges:

Bonne Idee: It Will Be Back
The Lucksmiths: Good Light
Cats On Fire: I Am The White-Mantled King
Eux Atres: Other Girls
Monade: At Last I Am Free

Elaine:

Dolly Mixture: Side Street Walker
Shop Assistants: What A Way To Die
Beat Happening: What' s Important
Lungleg: Punk Pop Travesty
Delta 5: Shadow



Pop crossword by Rory Mackie

ACROSS

1. (and 14 down) Manchester indiepop band that released the single 'Love Scattered Lives' in 1987 (6,5)
4. Nitzer ... band formed in 1982 by Vaughan Harris and Douglas McCarthy (3)
8. 1992 single by Pulp (1,1)
9. The ..... London Indiepop band that released the single 'What Went Wrong This Time?' in 1987 (6)
12. see 2 down
15. ... Watts-Russell co-founder of 4AD records (3)
16. (and 18 down) "After a while I started to copy that, and tell ... a ... things" Belle and Sebastian 'A Century Of Elvis' 1997 (3,3)
18. The .....s, Bristol Indiepop formed by Martin Whitehead in 1985 (8)
20. '... To Billie Joe' 1967 Bobbie Gentry song (3)
22 The ..... Essex Indiepop band who released the single 'The Anti-Midas Touch' in 1986

DOWN

1. 'S'Amuser Con ... Fous' 2007 EP by The Bobby McGee's (3)
2. (and 10 across) My ... . London based Indiepop band that share a member with Fanfarlo and released debut single 'Bad Decisions' in 2007 (3,8)
3. '... The Whirl' Boards of Canada song included on 1998 LP *Music Has The Right To Children* (3)
5. 'Cool Guitar ...' Opening song on Heavenly's 1991 debut LP *Heavenly Vs Satan* (3)
6. ... Stop, American Indiepop label founded in 1987 that has been referred to as "the American Sarah Records." (3)
7 .... Mcgee, founder of Creation Records or .... Horne, founder of Postcard (4)
10. '..... Bishop' 1993 EP by Unrest (6)
11. 'I Can ..... You (For 10,000 Miles)' 1978 single by Andy Arthurs (6)
13. Silver Apples singer and co-founder (6)
14. see 1 across
16. The .... Benders, band formed by Calvin Johnson and Doug Martsch who released 'Don't Touch My Bikini' on Fire Records in 1995 (4)
17. (and 19 down) 'Heard .. ...' 1986 single by The Bodines (2,3)
18. see 16 across
19. see 17 down
21. '.-.- Don't Stop The Beat' 2003 LP by Junior Senior (1,1)

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